

## Today's News - Wednesday, June 11, 2014

- Capps comments on King's earlier column about San Francisco voting for a Waterfront Height Limit law: it's "the kind of urban-planning tool that makes resilient design so difficult" and "one of the NIMBYist measures in recent memory...in the long-run, it works against the interests of homeowners."
- Ijeh calls London's Shell Centre approval a sign of "three terrible things: an irrevocably broken planning system; a catastrophic collapse of design skill among large swathes of the architectural profession; and a city whose unique urban and architectural character is now teetering on the verge of oblivion" - sadly, it won't be architects who "come to the rescue and harness design integrity to protect and enhance what is left of our assaulted urban environment."
- Heathcote x 2: "The reintegration of the Thames into the city is an opportunity that has been utterly and painfully wasted" by the rows of lifeless luxury towers rising along its banks - "a grim indictment of a city that seems entirely to lack a vision of what it wants to be" (with the new, moated U.S. Embassy as a perfect metaphor).
- He finds stainless steel spikes embedded in front of an apartment building to keep the homeless away "an ugly, hostile gesture" in an "architecture of deterrence" where the "permeability between public and private space is being lost. This is both a political and a design problem."
- Andreou, who was once homeless himself, calls the spikes "defensive architecture" that helps us to pretend real poverty doesn't exist" and "treats the dispossessed like a pigeon infestation" (an enlightening read).
- P+W decries "grossly inaccurate" cost estimates and a "disrespectful" design process in Edmonton's decision to scale back the firm's competition- and award-winning (and oh-so-green) redevelopment plans for former airport land (the mayor calls it "the pragmatic course").
- Architecture Canada | RAIC Alberta calls for Edmonton "not to dilute the sustainability objective" of P+W's Blatchford plan, fearing "the City is reaching for the middle (mediocre) with a compromised design."
- A new report explains how/why Africa's population boom strains cities and creates opportunities: "leaders can manage the influx through inclusiveness, eco-friendly development, and economic opportunity."
- An interesting take on the "future of sustainable retail design in Africa" that goes beyond building green and offering eco-friendly products: "We're talking about the mindset behind retail. Surely Africa doesn't need to go the way America has, with gargantuan shopping malls lined up from coast to coast."
- Valentine offers a most thoughtful take on how Boston can heal its "urban wound": "the spontaneous memorializing" after the Marathon bombing "illustrates how the healing of a city mirrors the healing of a bodily wound"; what is needed now is a permanent memorial "to restore dignity to the act of remembrance."
- Betsky's first take on Koolhaas's Biennale (there will be more): "I interpreted his proclamations to mean that architecture, as the making of buildings, is dead - he has banned anybody even approaching Michelangelo from the premises."
- Hecht talks to Safdie about his new archaeology campus being built on a Jerusalem hillside that is "a metaphor for an archaeological excavation" (great pix).
- Marble Fairbanks' LEED Gold Glen Oaks branch library in Queens, NY, incorporates a stunning "supergraphic made with daylight" (very cool).
- Four firms reinvent the bookshop: "We were expecting some arresting design and clever innovation, but got a lot more than that."
- Floating entertainment centers could be sailing towards Chicago's Navy Pier and NYC's Hudson River.
- Researchers at MIT Media Lab "create an algorithm that determines how safe a street looks to the human eye - information that could be used to guide important urban design decisions."
- An experimental new design school backed by some "design superpowers of the world" will be "a cross between a traditional school and a startup incubator."
- Call for entries (and one of our faves): Arch Record's annual Cocktail Napkin Sketch Contest.

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**How the Bay Area's Waterfront Height Limit Could Be a Disaster for Waterfront Resiliency: San Francisco voters just approved the kind of urban-planning tool that makes resilient design so difficult: direct democracy..passed one of the NIMBYist measures in recent memory...in the long-run, it works against the interests of homeowners...Density is itself a resilient design strategy.** By Kriston Capps -- John King [images, links]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

**Shell Centre approval is a catastrophe: ...points to three terrible things: an irrevocably broken planning system; a catastrophic collapse of design skill among large swathes of the architectural profession; and a city whose unique urban and architectural character is now teetering on the verge of oblivion...But surely...architects will ride to the rescue and harness design integrity to protect and enhance what is left of our assaulted urban environment? Sadly not. By Ije Ijeh- BD/Building Design (UK)**

**Thames tide turns back to the wealthy: The reintegration of the river into the city...is an opportunity that has been utterly and painfully wasted...ranks of straggling towers that do nothing, and then, at their centre, the building emblematic of the problems, the US embassy...actually has a moat around it. Could you find a better metaphor? The result is a sterile landscape of investment without connection. It is a grim indictment of a city that seems entirely to lack a vision of what it wants to be. By Edwin Heathcote -- KieranTimberlake; Foster + Partners; Frank Gehry- Financial Times (UK)**

**Spikes add to London's architecture of deterrence: ...stainless steel spikes...are certainly an ugly, hostile gesture...part of an increasing tendency to deter not only the homeless, but also the tired and the old from coming to sit or rest..the permeability between public and private space is being lost...This is both a political and a design problem...Public space should be made for the public and we are all members of the public, even if we are homeless. By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)**

**Spikes keep the homeless away, pushing them further out of sight: ...such 'defensive architecture' helps us to pretend real poverty doesn't exist...At the root of this cruelty, which treats the dispossessed like a pigeon infestation...are wilful misconceptions about homelessness... By Alex Andreou- Guardian (UK)**

**Design firm attacks 'grossly inaccurate' Blatchford development cost estimates: ...architects talked about "grossly inaccurate" cost estimates and a "disrespectful" design process...the criticism from Perkins+Will was relentless...Mayor called it "the pragmatic course. Is the scenario we're looking at here ... world leading? No, but it's going to be a spectacular neighbourhood".... Edmonton Journal (Canada)**

**Architecture Canada | RAIC Alberta implores City of Edmonton not to dilute the sustainability objective of Blatchford: ...note with concern...that the redevelopment plans for the former City Centre Airport lands have been significantly downsized from...a world-leading model for an environmentally sustainable, carbon-neutral, transit-oriented, mixed-use community for 30,000 residents...feared that the City is reaching for the middle (mediocre) with a compromised design... -- Perkins+Will Canada- Canadian Architect**

**Africa's population boom strains cities, creates opportunities: ...leaders can manage the influx through inclusiveness, eco-friendly development and economic opportunity. That's the conclusion of a new report, Tracking Africa's Progress in Figures, published by the African Development Bank. [link to report]- Citiscope**

**The future of sustainable retail design in Africa: ...there are ways to keep retail design green, but we're talking about more than just using green materials and providing a range of eco-friendly products...We're talking about the mindset behind retail..Surely Africa doesn't need to go the way America has, with gargantuan shopping malls lined up from coast to coast. By Laine Barnard/Bbrand- Bizcommunity.com (South Africa)**

**Boston, Boylston Street, and the healing of an urban wound: ...the spontaneous memorialising that followed the bombing of the Boston Marathon illustrates how the healing of a city mirrors the healing of a bodily wound. Unlike the body however, the**

marks left behind may be of the city's own designs, namely in the form of a permanent memorial...now needed to restore dignity to the act of remembrance. By Sam Valentine- The Global Urbanist

The Love Song of Rem Koolhaas at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale: The Dutch curator produced an exhibition pervaded by beautiful ghosts, reminiscent of a T.S. Eliot poem...I interpreted his proclamations to mean that architecture, as the making of buildings, is dead...he has banned anybody even approaching Michelangelo from the premises. By Aaron Betsky- Architect Magazine

Digging for The Past and Future: Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel designed by Moshe Safdie is under construction on a Jerusalem hillside...guiding principle in the design...a metaphor for an archaeological excavation...will give people a chance to see the process of archaeology... By Esther Hecht [slide show]- Architectural Record

A Supergraphic Made with Daylight: To highlight the relevance of libraries in the 21st century, Marble Fairbanks created a dynamic skylight that shouts it from the rooftop: ...incorporating the word "search" above the entrance of the...Glen Oaks branch library in Queens. But rather than using painted letters or signage, the firm lets natural light do the talking. [images, video]- Architect Magazine

Let's Reinvent the Bookshop: Bookshops are closing down like nobody's business. So do they need rethinking for the electronic age? Rosanna de Lisle asks four firms of architects and designers to create the bookshop of their dreams...We were expecting some arresting design and clever innovation, but got a lot more than that. -- Gensler; 20.20; Burdfilek; Coffey Architects [images]- The Economist / Intelligent Life (UK)

Ahoy! Chicago entrepreneur wants to park a floating pool in Lake Michigan: Party boats are common...off the shores of Chicago..Beau D'Arcy wants to corner that market with Breakwater Chicago...a large dome to shield the "tropical pool environment" during winter. Programming includes three restaurants, a bar/event space, a large swimming pool, a spa, and retail space. -- SPACE Architects + Planners [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Beach-Topped Barge Proposed For Hudson River: As New York City's +Pool...gets closer to the water, it was high-time for another river-based project to make itself known...City Beach NYC...doesn't actually offer the chance to swim...space for a food court, two local restaurants, changing rooms, a guest services desk, and a "kids history & marine science lab." -- Matt Berman/Andrew Kotchen/workshop/apd; Nathaniel Stanton/Craft Engineering [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

How Crowdsourcing And Machine Learning Will Change The Way We Design Cities: Researchers at MIT Media Lab are using crowdsourced data to create an algorithm that determines how safe a street looks to the human eye - information that could be used to guide important urban design decisions. -- StreetScore- Fast Company

30 Weeks: An Experimental New Design School, Backed By Google: Design superpowers of the world have united to create an experimental new school. Will it work? ...a cross between a traditional school and a startup incubator...will operate out of a coworking space in Dumbo, Brooklyn. -- Parsons; Pratt; School of Visual Arts; The Cooper Union; Hyper Island- Fast Company

Call for entries: Cocktail Napkin Sketch Contest 2014 (open to U.S. residents); deadline: June 30- Architectural Record

-- We Wouldn't Mind Getting Stuck There: Airports: Airports are places where people gather voluntarily in a collective state of wanting to leave. In some cases, however, the long walk to the terminal can be a quite rewarding experience. -- Ricardo Bofill/Taller de Arquitectura; Rafael Viñoly; Foster & Partners; Santiago Calatrava; UNStudio -- Travel guide: Marseille and Vicinity

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